



THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20201

September 19, 1974

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF STATE

It was my privilege to head the U.S. Delegation to the World Population Conference in Bucharest, Romania, from August 19-30, 1974. You will receive an unclassified report that covers the Conference in some detail, including the major issues considered by the participants and the accomplishments that the Delegation believes were achieved. You will also receive a briefing memorandum on the Conference prepared by your Special Assistant for Population Matters, Mr. Philander Claxton. I will, therefore, limit this report to my own impressions of the Conference, other delegations, and my meetings with various officials in Bucharest.

The Conference was extremely well planned and organized -- a tribute to the Conference Secretary-General, Sr. Carillo-Flores of Mexico, and U.N. Secretariat officials. The physical arrangements in Bucharest were also excellent, including translation services, unobtrusive security, etc., all of which were provided by the Romanian Organizing Committee. I believe the daily morning meeting of the Delegation, which I called, and the daily evening press briefing we held, helped bind our Delegation together and helped it to work effectively. Our Delegation met each morning to exchange views on various issues and to receive instructions. We also enjoyed outstanding support from the Embassy staff, an essential ingredient to our success.

After the first few days of the Conference, the Delegation decided that our policy of maintaining a low profile was unproductive, and that a more active role should be taken. One result of this posture was Chris Herter's rebuttal to the Soviet assertion in the Committee on Environment that the world could support 35 billion people if only all nations would adopt a controlled, socialist economy. In his remarks, a copy of which is attached, he cited the record of the Russian grain importation, to which the Soviets only replied that they had had bad weather. Our

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higher visibility also enabled us to argue points and insist on votes on debatable issues in the working group on the World Population Plan of Action (WPPA). This attitude resulted in a quiet leadership role by the U.S. Delegation, on which we received many compliments.

Despite our daily press conference, which was well attended and during which most of the substantive items before the Conference were discussed, (and which incidentally was held principally to help the press cover a difficult story), the press continued to report the Conference as a failure, and to highlight the polemics of the Communist and Third World countries. Even now, with the WPPA available as adopted, there appears little appreciation of the fact of the Plan's adoption by acclamation or of the striking similarity between the adopted text and the preliminary draft. The press seemed intent on reporting failure because we did not secure agreement that all nations would immediately reduce their birth rates. I believe the agreement that was achieved represents very significant progress in an area on which few believed more than a handful of nations would ever meet, let alone agree on anything. By comparison with the Law of the Sea Conference, for example, where no agreement was achieved on anything, Bucharest could be said to be an unqualified success.

The Population Tribune, with some 1400 representatives of non-governmental organizations from around the world (including 300 from the United States), met concurrently with the Conference. Our delegation maintained excellent liaison with the Tribune, and Governor Peterson and I both spoke to a gathering of many of the representatives arranged by the Embassy's Cultural Affairs Officer.

I represented the Delegation in the Plenary sessions of the Conference, where major statements were made by participants. On the opening day, at our request, I was recognized to present President Ford's greetings, and what was, in effect, his first message to the world in conference assembled. Socialist theories on the relationship of population factors to development dominated the early sessions. Toward the end of Plenary debates, the air became less charged because of a number of balancing statements that effectively focused on population planning and because of a somewhat flagging interest of the delegates in the Plenary itself. Our major disappointment in the Plenary was that -- despite strong and relevant statements by the U.N. Secretary-General, the Secretary-General of the Conference, and NGO representatives on the important linkage

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between poverty, food shortage, and the growing population problem and the need for governments to take political action -- the Plenary statements by a great majority of countries had almost no sense of urgency.

The major activity of the Conference was carried out in three committees and the working group on the World Population Plan of Action, which met concurrently with the Plenary. The committees -- on development, the environment, and the family -- accomplished their work in a spirit of cooperation, often reaching agreement on resolutions by consensus rather than by vote.

The working group on the WPPA achieved what is, I believe, a strong and meaningful document, supported by a consensus that was developed through careful conciliation and balance of diverse viewpoints. When it became apparent that references to family planning and fertility related goals would come under strong attack, especially from the PRC and the Holy See, we secured "compromise" language, that included the concept of sovereign nations setting their own quantitative goals and trying thereby to reach specific population growth rates by 1985, which in many ways was stronger, in its result, than the preliminary draft.

We were able to prevail on two important "housekeeping" issues. One was to prevent any new institutional or funding arrangements within the U.N. structure to deal with population matters. The other was to prevent the question of PRG representation at the Conference from coming before the Plenary. The matter was settled in the Credentials Committee, where the Romanian Government, after having failed to achieve a compromise solution prior to the opening of the Conference, supported our contention that the PRG should not be present and the matter should not interfere with the main work of the Conference itself.

The Algerians and other countries constantly sought to insert references in Conference documentation to the "new economic order" -- an outcome of the 6th Special Session of the General Assembly. Although extreme language was eventually rejected, there are three references in the WPPA. When the U.S. voted against these insertions, we lost by an overwhelming majority. In my closing statement to the Plenary, I reaffirmed the reservations on this matter made by the United States at the 6th Special Session.

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I also pointed out the inconsistency in that those nations pushing for the "new international economic order" which purposefully "requires" certain action on an international level without regard to individual sovereignty, were the same nations who opposed population reduction resolutions because they interfered with "national sovereignty."

A critical impasse of the Conference -- when we were likely to be isolated against the Third World -- took place in Plenary the next to last day of the Conference. At that time the Africans tried to push through three resolutions on decolonialization, apartheid, and the funding of travel of liberation movements. I rose in the Plenary on a point of order and complained that the three resolutions had only been circulated that morning, thereby violating the 24-hour rule about distribution of resolutions. I pointed out that I was only expressing procedural rather than substantive concerns, but since the issues in the three resolutions had not been discussed by any Conference committee, were not on the Conference agenda, and did not relate to the Conference, and since we had no information about the resolutions and no instructions, I urged that the Chair rule that the resolutions were out of order and should be forwarded to the 29th General Assembly of the United Nations without action by this Conference.

I made the point to the Plenary and later, with great emphasis, to Conference President Macovescu, that if this loose procedure were followed, there would be no way we could finish the next day and no limit to the number or subject matter of resolutions that could be taken up.

Conference President Macovescu adjourned the Plenary for 30 minutes while he held consultations with the U.S. Delegation, some 25 Black African representatives, Algeria, Cuba, and the Secretariat. He secured what he believed was virtually a commitment from the Africans that no more resolutions would be introduced by them, and he then advised the U.S. Delegation representatives that he was prepared to rule the three resolutions were in order and that we would have to challenge and try to overrule his ruling by a vote on the competence of the Conference to discuss these issues. It was clear that we would be heavily outvoted on this point if such a vote were taken.

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He controlled the rather volatile Africans in a calm and collected manner and finally urged the U.S. Delegation to accept his oral assurance that these resolutions could be validly discussed by the Conference since it was in effect the drafter of its own rules of procedure. He also advised me personally that he was confident no other resolutions would be introduced and he proved to be right about this. The Chairman then reconvened the Plenary and ruled that the resolutions could be discussed and all three were adopted without a vote.

I would strongly recommend that for the future we try to secure adoption of a procedure which precludes the quick introduction of such resolutions and the by-passing of formal committee consideration of each resolution. The lack of rules at the Population Conference did permit such loose procedure, and if more resolutions had come in, the whole two weeks work of the committee might have been undermined -- so perhaps our point of order helped block such an unfortunate result.

As I noted earlier, the Romanian Government had made special efforts to ensure the success of the Conference. Romania eagerly sought the World Population Conference as part of its overall strategy of attracting as much international activity as possible to its capital. To the extent the GOR can build up United Nations or other international presence in Bucharest, its independence from Soviet hegemony is quietly enhanced, and another deterrent to Soviet bullying is put in place. Consequently, Romania's commitment to the success of the Conference was the predominant factor in GOR behavior, and an all-out effort was made to leave delegations with memories of Romanian diplomatic skill, of good feeling, and of conference accomplishments. At the same time, the GOR took pains to balance and reconcile this concern with the other faces of its foreign policy - relations with the USSR and the East European camp, the industrialized West, the Third World and particularly the radical non-aligned.

Romania's competition with its socialist brethren was most marked when the GOR mounted a pre-conference effort in Washington, New York, and Geneva, urging the United States to allow the PRG to be invited to attend the Conference in some capacity or other. This campaign peaked when State

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Council Vice President Bodnaras talked about "conference trouble" unless the United States softened its stand. In fact serious difficulties did not materialize since the non-aligned were not sure that they could win a conference vote on this issue.

After the Conference started, the GOR played a reasonably positive role from the standpoint of the United States. While they were not adverse to trying to persuade us to take positions we might not otherwise adopt, they did make the most of their limited ability to control what went on at the Conference and clearly were able to moderate the wild impulses of the non-aligned. This moderating effect was carried out in spite of the fact that it might somewhat tarnish their own pretensions with regard to the Third World fraternity.

Romania's Plenary statement was a soft-sell version of the "non-Malthusian" credo. Romania's "better world" resolution in Committee I (development) omitted "socialist" rhetoric, and was an attempt to construct a reasonable consensus without Soviet participation.

In the working group drafting the World Population Plan of Action, the Romanians spoke out very little and remained almost invisible. The GOR played no broker role in the working group. In voting on separate amendments, Romania regularly separated itself from the Soviet Union and associated East European states and more often than not sided with the Algiers non-aligned. On one key working group vote, for example, when a compromise among the Holy See, China, and Great Britain was assaulted by a competitive Byelorussian proposal, the Romanians sided with the former. When the Czech delegate spoke, in the final day's Plenary round of speeches in the name of the USSR and Eastern European countries, he omitted the name of Romania - but this was perhaps because his remarks were in part a thank-you statement to the Conference host. At an earlier point, when the USSR purported to speak for all Eastern European countries in the Credentials Committee, a Romanian delegate privately asserted that "Romania lets no one speak for her in this way."

In conclusion, it should be pointed out that Romanian officials were consistently courteous, polite and helpful to their U.S. counterparts, and the U.S. Delegation usually got early warning -- although sometimes not all that early -- about what it faced next from the non-aligned.

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The Holy See had a strong delegation and seemed to have representatives in every committee, working group and subgroup meeting. Although often uncompromising and outspoken, they nevertheless made several constructive contributions in regard to responsible parenthood. The two particular amendments to the WPPA that they put forward were soundly defeated, but they did not give up. Their representative was the only person in the Plenary, after the WPPA was adopted by acclamation, to announce that the Holy See was not a part of the consensus of this Conference. In fact, the speaker said this three times in his address and said, in addition, "We do not compromise, our views are known and we maintain them."

The Chinese lashed out repetitively at both "imperialism" and "hegemonism" throughout the Conference and blamed the world's ills on the superpowers (without naming them like the Albanians). However, Chinese invective tilted against the USSR by virtue of special mention of "social imperialism" (one whole paragraph in Plenary speech) and of "that super-power which labels itself socialist." The USSR generally rebutted Chinese polemics in low-key fashion or had somebody else do it, as when the Czechs countered a Chinese jab at the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia or (in the final day's speech) when they maintained for the record that "imperialism" was the problem, not those others who had selflessly helped the Third World always. On the final day after the usual Chinese blast at the "two superpowers, one of which calls itself Socialist," the USSR delegates, seated in front of us, turned around and shook hands with some of the U.S. Delegation.

A majority of the countries of the developing world maintained the same general positions towards the subject matter of the Conference that they had expressed at the regional pre-Conference meetings. Generalizing, one could say that the Asians are the most aware of their population problems. The African countries are slowly becoming aware of the problem, but at this Conference they were less accusative of the West than we had expected, and I believe they learned much at this Conference about the seriousness of the problem. Some countries in Latin America are beginning to move on family planning issues.

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There were some real surprises. Brazil has done a complete turn-around with regard to its population policy and at the Conference announced its support for domestic family planning programs. Argentina, which has one of the lowest birth rates in Latin America, almost overnight has turned pro-natalist, a position that caught almost everyone at the Conference unawares. India was a major disappointment, since it rarely spoke out. Although India and Pakistan generally supported the U.S. position, their support was neither consistent nor strong. Corridor gossip had it that both countries were under orders not to offend the Chinese. Iran and the Philippines consistently both took major positive leadership roles and were frequently joined by Bangladesh, Thailand and Indonesia.

Algeria remained blatant on all subjects at all times. They were not particularly interested in population but strove successfully to obtain the chairmanship of the working group on the World Population Plan of Action. They used this as a platform, particularly for their ideas on the new economic order, the statement of principles and the Program of Action that came out of the 6th Special Session of the General Assembly. For the future we should make major, pre-Conference efforts to get enough votes to elect decent chairmen for all major committees. The fact that we got a reasonable agreement at the Conference despite the Algerians is more of a tribute to our Delegation than anything else.

The general Third World and African bloc theory that we should cut our consumption so as to be able to supply them, is quite fallacious from a number of viewpoints, as I pointed out to them at various opportunities. First, if we cut our consumption, that inevitably, under our system, means a cut in production which can only harm our critics. Second, it is hardly realistic to expect that our response to their constant, pounding criticism will be to cut our consumption to ensure them free food. Third, they appear to have quite overlooked the fact that we have already given in excess of \$30 billion worth of free food to our less fortunate neighbors.

While in Bucharest, I had the opportunity to meet with a number of Romanian Government officials, including President Ceausescu, Prime Minister Manea Manescu, Foreign Minister George Macovescu, Vice President of the State Council Emil Bodnaras, the Minister of Health, Dr. Theodor Burghele, and the Minister of Education and Instruction, Paul Niculescu-Mizil. All of these meetings were cordial,

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and each official with whom I spoke assured me of the satisfaction the GOR feels for the way relations with the United States are developing. Full reports on all of these meetings have been submitted to your Department.

As you know, I was in Geneva visiting the World Health Organization during the celebration of the 30th Anniversary of Romanian Liberation. Governor Russell Peterson, vice-chairman of the Delegation, represented the United States at the Celebration, and had an opportunity to talk at some length with Premier Kosygin, Vice Premier Li Sieu Nieu of China, and President and Mrs. Ceausescu. His report on those conversations (Bucharest telegram 3769) is extremely interesting, and I recommend it to you.

In my statement to the closing Plenary session, I said we went to Bucharest to deal with one of the most serious problems that will confront mankind for the rest of this century. The World Population Plan of Action that we adopted to help solve those problems was not a victory or defeat for any faction, nation, or group of nations. Rather, it was a triumph for the process of international cooperation under the United Nations.

As I have written to you in previous letters, I would like to commend particularly Russell Peterson, Phil Claxton, John McDonald, Dr. Louis Hellman of our Department, who is one of the great authorities on population, General Draper, and many others for their invaluable assistance. Ambassador Barnes was superb as was the whole U.S. Embassy staff.

Secretary

*[Handwritten signature]*

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